

PATRICIA HIGHSMITH'S FICTION TO CINEMA
MCA

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student: Marc Rosenberg

Date: June 7, 2016

PATRICIA HIGHSMITH'S FICTION TO CINEMA ABSTRACT

How does the psychological uncertainty in Patricia Highsmith's fiction benefit the cinematic adaptation of her work?

Patricia Highsmith died in 1995 and her fiction has grown in popularity not only with readers, but with filmmakers. Since the director Alfred Hitchcock adapted *Strangers on a Train* in 1951, more than thirty of her novels have been made into films. The adaptation from one medium into another is an abstract process, particularly when novels are as psychologically dependent as Highsmith's. In this paper, I examine the cinematic strategies experienced filmmakers have used to adapt Highsmith's psychological content into a visual medium and discuss their level of success.

The creative component of my application is the feature film screenplay, "Friendly Fire", in which I make use of the same 'psychological uncertainty' found in Highsmith's fiction. In "Friendly Fire", Fred Lake, a fifty-year-old American sports journalist, is diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor and given only months to live. His fear of death is only trumped by his concern for his daughter and grandchildren, who he will leave under crushing debt. It is at this stage he is approached by the CIA, who know of his diagnosis and offer him the chance to earn five million dollars as a suicide bomber. In this work I have used the cinematic strategies discussed in my exegesis to exploit 'psychological uncertainty' for the benefit the story.